

ABOUT VISUAL ARTISTS

Carol Novotne: "A Watercolor Tour of Europe"

Nov. 1-Dec 31 at the Lewis and Clark Library in Helena with a reception and artist's talk at 5:30 p.m. Nov. 1
Artist's website: www.novotneart.com

Carol Novotne offers a "watercolor tour of Europe," filled with many of the Continent's landmarks, including the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin and the Grand Canal of Venice. Mostly though, the Helena artist depicts scenes that captured her interest: a chef taking a quiet break after a long day of cooking, two nuns hurrying across a plaza in Krakow.

The 23 paintings also demonstrate the artist's skill in watercolor media. The hard edges and shape of a huge cast-bronze fountain are contrasted with the muted colors and soft contours of the lavender fields in France's Luberon Hills. "I taught watercolor for 20-some years," she says. "You can see the difference methods at work here."

She also includes several sketchbooks, allowing the viewer to see a painting from its inception to a finished piece of art.

From small works to large pieces, Novotne offers an artist's perspective of Europe, celebrating its landscapes, seascapes, people and buildings. "They signify my attachment to a place through the people and things that happened there."

Novotne, a native Montanan, graduated with honors from The University of Montana in 1970 with a bachelor of fine arts, and went on to earn a master's degree in anthropology, a subject she later taught at Carroll College. She was appointed to the Montana Arts Council in 1990 and served until 2003, including a stint as vice chair. She's a member of the Women Artists of the West and the Montana Watercolor Society and president of the Art Center in Helena.

According to an article in *Peaks and Plains Magazine*, "Her post-impressionistic art has a strong, recognizable style with thick, rich, creamy brush strokes. She knows what makes her perspective original and runs with it."

Phoebe Toland, "Resonance"

Through Dec. 31 at the Holter Museum of Art in Helena

Helena artist Phoebe Toland shares 11 collaged woodblock prints and three sculptural print installations that explore our passage through life and human impact on the environment and landscape in "Resonance."

"Like a well-loved tune, a passage in a book or a favorite view, there is comfort and power in a repeated image," writes the artist. "The themes in this show, life's journey, the environment, captivity and the endurance of the human spirit, were made tangible through the power of the print."

The prints, with titles like "Seismic," "Germination," "Loss" and "Progress," offer abstract reflections on events and policies that shape present lives and the future. They were created through an innovative technique in which Toland deconstructs and reconstructs woodblock prints to create unique collages. "Whether subtle or brusque, wood-block prints embody a unique, lively quality," writes the artist.

Also included in the exhibition are three new sculptural print installations, "Here and Beyond," "Water Finds a Way" and "Windblown." According to reporter Marga Lincoln in a story published Oct. 4 in the *Independent Record*, "light, movement and airiness are just a few of the qualities captured" in these new works, which are "emotionally reminiscent of waves lapping against a beach, a fluttering of falling leaves and the gentle pattern of rain."

Toland, a native of Pennsylvania, earned a BFA from Rochester Institute of Technology in New York and an MFA from Montana State University in Bozeman. She has received numerous awards, including the Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation Fellowship, and her work is in the permanent collections of the Holter Museum, the Yellowstone Art Museum in Billings and Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art in Great Falls, and in private collections across the country.

According to the *IR*, this may be the last opportunity to see an exhibit of Toland's work in Montana for a while because she and her husband, ceramic artist Richard Notkin, are planning to move to Washington in June.

Paul Tunkis: "The Uncommon Eye:

Impressions of a Montana Outdoorsman"

Through Nov. 23 at the Hockaday Museum of Art in Kalispell
Artist's website: www.paultunkis.com

"As an artist, I see the eyes, broad colors, the impression of life and its surroundings. A memory, a recollection of an encounter, not too much detail, just enough to suggest what I thought I saw, just enough

to let you, the viewer, fill in the details from your own memories."

So says Livingston artist Paul Tunkis, who won first place in "Catch the Vision: From Dreams to Discovery," the Hockaday Museum's 2013 competition for emerging artists. His solo exhibition offers a compendium of watercolors, capturing ephemeral images of wildlife and the Montana landscape.

"The Montana landscape is constantly changing – the light fleeting and the weather unpredictable, the awe-inspiring lasts only moments," he says. "Capturing that special moment challenges the artist in me."

Tunkis has been interested in painting and drawing since his early childhood, growing up on a ranch in northern California. After studying art and architecture at the University of Oregon, he studied drawing and painting in San Francisco with Thomas Leighton and Marjorie Lester.

He revived his interest in art in 2011, after living in Livingston for 30 years and working as a hunting and fishing guide in Montana and Colorado. His search for new wildlife experiences and artistic inspiration takes him all over the state, as well as to Australia, New Zealand, Chile and Namibia.

His work was featured in a recent issue of *Sporting Classics Daily* (sportingclassicsdaily.com).

Emily Nell Yellow Bird: "The Many Charms of Nature – 'Chust fer Fancy'"

Through Dec. 28 at Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art in Great Falls

Artist's website: blackpintoart.com

This exhibition consists of new and colorful watercolor and cut-paper works by Wilsall artist Emily Nell Yellow Bird.

The artist grew up in the Mahantango Valley of Pennsylvania, and says her ancestors, the Pennsylvania Dutch, enjoyed decorating everything from furniture to grave-stones, and from plates to butter molds. They are referred to as the "Fancy Dutch," while the Amish and Mennonites are called the "Plain Dutch."

That decorative spark influences her own work, which weaves together

watercolor painting and hand-cut paper in a contemporary version of the phrase "Chust fer Fancy," or "Just for Fancy." She also includes works from her "Centripetal Satires Series," wrapping familiar objects with irony in a circular form.

"It's amazing how much I am like my ancestors," she writes. "As I research their designs, I revel at the many flowers and birds that take flight in my mind. Imagination, patience and embellishments are three things they impart, and lastly I bring my heart."

Yellow Bird is the promotional director and co-owner of Black Pinto Horse Fine Arts with her husband, Monte Yellow Bird. She earned her teaching credential for K-6, with a specialty in art, from Messiah College in Grantham, PA, taught for many years, and continues to provide visual art workshops for K-12 students.

Jason Jam, "Miniatures and More"

Nov. 1-Dec. 31 at Two Rivers Gallery in Big Timber with receptions Nov. 15 and Dec. 13

Artist's website: www.jamcomics.com

Jason Jam, one of Two River Gallery's new artists, will be featured in this group show. He was born in Billings, and has been fascinated with art – especially cartooning – since childhood and taught himself to draw by emulating his favorite cartoonists.

He took art classes at Billings Senior High and began working in the screen-printing industry after graduation, eventually creating graphics and animation for video games. His weekly comic strip, "Bill's Town," ran for over four years in the *Billings Outpost*.

In 2008, Jam started teaching "Creating Comics," a cartooning class offered to kids during the Summer Art Academy at Rocky Mountain College. He launched Jason Jam Gallery in 2012 to showcase his cartooning pursuits as well as his fine art efforts, which include pen and ink drawings, oil and watercolor paintings and, most recently, linocut prints.

For each of the past three years, he's created "100 Drawings in 100 Days" (check them out at his website, jamcomics.com).



"Ready to Release" by Paul Tunkis



"Takin' Five, Krakow," by Carol Novotne



"The Prolific Paintbrush" by Emily Nell Yellow Bird



"Windblown" by Phoebe Toland



"Beartooth" by Jason Jam



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Send your submissions for About Visual Arts

With About Visual Arts, *State of the Arts* continues to profile living Montana artists (no students, please), whose work is the focus of a current exhibit (on display during some portion of the two months covered by the current issue of *State of the Arts*).

Submissions must include:

- A digital image of the artist's work, with title of the piece;
- A brief bio and description of the artist's work (up to 300 words);
- Dates and title of exhibit; and
- The gallery or museum name, town and phone number.

MAC will select submissions that reflect a cross-section of gender, geography, styles and ethnicity, and are from a mix of public and private galleries and museums.

Deadline for submissions for the January/February issue is Dec. 1. Please send submissions to writesu@livelytimes.com with About Visual Arts in the subject line.

About Visual Artists
compiled by Kristi Niemeyer